

Message Text

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22-11

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-07 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07

NSAE-00 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SSO-00 IO-10 NEAE-00

INRE-00 /051 W

----- 038694

O 261144Z NOV 75

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2474

INFO AMEMBASSY DACCA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA IMMEDIATE

USLO PEKING

USIA WASHDC

CINCPAC

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, IN, BG

SUBJECT: BANGLADESH: INDIAN PRESS REACTION

REF: NEW DELHI 15714

1. THE NEW DELHI PRESS NOVEMBER 26, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE CPI'S DAILY, "PATRIOT," DEVOTES LESS ATTENTION TO BANGLADESH THAN IN PREVIOUS DAYS. THIS MAY, HOWEVER, BE DUE TO A LACK OF MATERIAL. THREE OF THE SIX OF THE CAPITAL'S MORNING PAPERS NOVEMBER 26 COVER THE MEETINGS OF PRESIDENT SAYEM'S SPECIAL ASSISTANT, A. SATTAR, WITH POLITICAL LEADERS IN SMALL FRONT PAGE ARTICLES (DACCA 5818). SEVERAL PAPERS RUN STORIES ALREADY CARRIED IN OTHER DAILIES NOVEMBER 25 IN INSIDE PAGES.

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2. "PATRIOT'S" NOVEMBER 26 FRONT-PAGE HEADLINE READS: "DIVISION IN TANK FORCE COMPLETES DACCA ARMY RIFT." THE ARTICLE, DATED IN CALCUTTA, SAYS THAT THIS DEVELOPMENT WHICH TOOK PLACE IN THE "LAST COUPLE DAYS" LED TO A SERIES OF MEETINGS OF THE MARTIAL LAW ADMINISTRATORS. THE TANK FORCE IS DESCRIBED AS HAVING BEEN THE "MOST SOLID STRONGHOLD OF THE PRESENT MILITARY REGIME," AS "MOST OF THE MURDERERS" OF MUJIB BELONGED TO IT. DIPLOMATIC CIRCLES IN CALCUTTA ARE SAID TO BE RECEIVING REPORTS THAT "A STRONG SENSE OF SUSPICION PREVAILS AMONG THE PEOPLE OF CHITTAGONG ABOUT THE ARRIVAL OF THREE US SHIPS." THE SHIPS ARE SUSPECTED OF CARRYING ARMS, "PATRIOT" REPORTS, DESPITE THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE GOB THAT THEY WERE CARRYING WHEAT. THE VESSELS WERE SAID TO HAVE BEEN OFF-LOADED UNDER HEAVY ARMED GUARD AT THE "DEAD OF NIGHT" NOVEMBER 17, 18, AND 19. A LARGE NUMBER OF WOODEN CRATES, NOT USUALLY USED TO TRANSPORT WHEAT, WERE SAID TO HAVE BEEN UNLOADED.

3. THE CONGRESS-R UNOFFICIAL DAILY, "NATIONAL HERALD," IS THE ONLY DELHI PAPER NOVEMBER 26 TO EDITORIALIZE ON BANGLADESH. COMMENTING ON MRS. GANDHI'S SPEECH TO PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS NOVEMBER 24 (REFTEL), THE "HERALD" SAYS: "AS SHE HAS POINTED OUT, THE GRAVITY OF THE SITUATION IN NEIGHBOURING BANGLADESH IS AN INDEX OF THE KIND OF TURN THINGS COULD TAKE IN INDIA IF THE GOVERNMENT LOWERED THEIR GUARD. HOWEVER, HER MAIN OBJECT IS NOT SELF-JUSTIFICATION BUT TO AWAKEN THE NATION TO THE DANGERS IMPENDING AGAINST IT FROM MORE THAN ONE DIRECTION. TO THE EAST, THE UNSETTLED CONDITIONS IN BANGLADESH ARE A REAL THREAT IN MORE SENSES THAN ONE. FIRST, THE UNREST COULD PROVE INFECTIOUS AND CROSS THE BORDER. SECOND, THE EMERGENCE OF AN UNFRIENDLY REGIME THERE WOULD DIRECTLY THREATEN PEACE IN THIS COUNTRY. BUT BY FAR THE MOST UNWELCOME DEVELOPMENT WOULD BE THE EMERGENCE OF A REGIME THERE SPONSORED BY A BIG POWER WHICH COULD FACE THIS COUNTRY WITH A MAJOR POLITICAL AND SECURITY PROBLEM."

4. DELHI PRESS CONTINUES SILENT ON IMPLICIT ANTI-INDIAN ASPECTS OF GENL RAHMAN'S NOV 23 SPEECH IN DACCA.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS, PRESS COMMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 26 NOV 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ShawDG
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975NEWDE15777
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750411-0986
From: NEW DELHI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t1975117/aaaaafsw.tel
Line Count: 98
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 NEW DELHI 15714
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ShawDG
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 16 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <16 JUN 2003 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <30 OCT 2003 by ShawDG>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: BANGLADESH: INDIAN PRESS REACTION
TAGS: PFOR, IN, BG
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006